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# Senior Executive Intelligence Brief



**Friday, 16 June 2000**

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## *Leading Development*

### **Koreas:** *Analytic Perspective*

#### **Poised To Reshape Peninsula Ties**

The Koreans are positioned to expand bilateral relations quickly under the Kims' summit formula for reconciliation. It resembles past agreements, but they are the first Korean leaders to identify themselves personally with the content and implementation.

- The external pressure that helped scuttle earlier deals—Cold War competition, saber rattling, and nuclear tension—has been replaced by pressure for results, particularly North Korea's economic morass and President Kim's term, which ends in early 2002.
- Kim Chong-il has recast the South as a legitimate partner rather than a US lackey, and his personal involvement suggests he is prepared to make concessions on issues like family reunions to expand economic cooperation.

*The full impact of the summit will emerge over several months. President Kim publicly has said there is much more to the agreement than has been announced so far, and the implementation process will be essential to defining vaguely worded goals.*

The next step is to form committees and arrange talks to work out the procedural complexities of implementing the agreement. Both sides have said discussions should begin soon, but no dates have been set.

#### **Domestic Critics in the Wings**

President Kim can ride South Korea's summit euphoria for a while but could face objections once the opposition scrutinizes the agreement and weighs the implications for the South's economy and security posture.

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- President Kim may have set the stage for future criticism in his homecoming speech by emphasizing opportunities for advancing inter-Korean cooperation but hardly mentioning human rights or security issues.
- He implied that South Korea's long-term national interest rests in forging a unified nation that can deal with "the four superpowers"—Russia, China, and Japan, as well as the US—from economic strength, rather than in a community of shared interests with the US and the West.

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